

NORTHERN PLAINS AREA

Policy Memorandum

DATE: October 5, 2001
SUBJECT: CONTROL OF SENSITIVE PROPERTY
NUMBER: PM-01-003
EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately Until Replaced or Superseded

1. Background

Effective February 24, 1997, USDA raised the accountable threshold level to \$5,000 for all personal property, including automated data processing equipment. This means that most items with an acquisition cost under \$5,000 are no longer listed on the Accountable Property Officer's (APO) official inventory in the PROP system. The only mandated exceptions are leased property, firearms, law enforcement badges, and property on loan to non-Federal recipients. Property management officers have the authority to designate other items as sensitive to ensure proper control of and to protect Government property.

2. Purpose

At present there is no standardized method in NPA to account for equipment that is highly susceptible to theft. This Memorandum describes procedures to implement better accountability and security for NPA sensitive property.

3. Personal Property Inventory

Each location will use the PROP system to set up one personal property inventory for all Government-owned sensitive property below the acquisition cost of \$5,000. The APO for this inventory will be the Administrative Officer, Research Leader, Laboratory Director, or Center Director.

4. Examples of Sensitive Property

Examples of sensitive equipment are laptop computers; digital cameras; portable computer equipment such as personal digital assistants (PDA) e.g., Palm Pilots; and any equipment that is highly susceptible to theft. The above items and any other property that a location determines could be easily stolen should be placed on the sensitive inventory.

5. **Travel Precautions**

Air travelers have reported thefts of sensitive equipment from briefcases or computer cases checked as baggage. To avoid damage and help prevent thefts, NPA employees will not check laptop computers as a separate piece of luggage or inside checked briefcases.

Laptops will either be carried with the employee on board or secured inside larger pieces of locked luggage. Similarly, laptops and other sensitive property should be secured and/or placed out of sight when stored in vehicles or unoccupied hotel rooms.

6. **Questions/Guidance**

Questions concerning this policy or requests for waivers from this policy may be directed to the Area Property Office.



W.H. BLACKBURN
Area Director
Northern Plains Area